

word “covfefe.” We still don’t know what it means, why the President tweeted it, or if it was simply an innocent typo, something we are all guilty of making. But what is more important than the creation of a random, now infamous, word in a tweet is that the President deleted the post less than 12 hours later. This is just 1 of 18 tweets the President has deleted since his inauguration, and, each time, the question is raised whether or not he can legally do that, because when the President deletes a tweet, it is equivalent to him destroying a record.

That is why I have introduced the COVFEFE Act, Communications Over Various Feeds Electronically for Engagement. It is a silly name, but a serious issue. By expanding the Presidential Records Act to include social media, it would ensure that all tweets posted by the President from his personal account are archived and preserved and would finally answer the question on whether or not the President can delete tweets.

Although the bill’s name is a little tongue-in-cheek, the focus of the legislation is more important now than ever. If the President is going to take to social media to make sudden public policy proclamations, we must ensure that these statements are documented and preserved for future reference. As Sean Spicer has said, each @realDonaldTrump tweet should be taken as an official White House statement.

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Tweets are powerful, and the President must be held accountable for every post, from commenting on NATO, to the Paris Agreement, to his Muslim travel ban, and his response to the devastating terror attack in London. And on Monday, we learned that the appellate court cited the President’s tweet in ruling against the travel ban.

The President’s frequent unfiltered use of his personal Twitter account as a means of official communication is unprecedented, and we must respond accordingly. Sometimes it takes a creative acronym to drive attention to a much larger issue.

This is the second bill I have introduced this Congress to address the lack of transparency in the administration. Back in March, I introduced the aptly named “Mar-a-Lago Act” to require the White House visitor logs, or visitor logs from any other location where the President conducts official business, to be made public to the American people.

Unlike the Obama administration, the current administration stated they are unwilling to do so. For these reasons, it is critical that we push commonsense policy that promotes government accountability and transparency, because in order to maintain public trust in government, elected officials must answer for what they do and say. That includes 140-character tweets and records of who has the President’s ear

at the White House, Trump Tower, or his southern Florida home. If regaining the public’s trust is the first step, then taking action to maintain that trust for the long term is the next.

Standalone transparency legislation is absolutely necessary, but it is not enough. We must stop treating transparency and accountability as peripheral issues and proactively incorporate them into everything we do.

Going forward, I will continue to promote efforts to increase public access to the Federal Government and ensure that all elected officials are being held accountable for their words and their actions.

THE PARIS CLIMATE ACCORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, President Trump’s most important mandate is to revive America’s struggling economy. This simply cannot be done under the terms of the Paris climate accord.

According to The Heritage Foundation, adhering to that agreement would have destroyed 400,000 American jobs and forfeit \$2.5 trillion in lost productivity by 2035. That is about \$20,000 in lower annual earnings for a family of four.

There is a reason we suffered the slowest economic growth of the post-war era under Barack Obama: bad deals and bad policies like this.

President Obama bound America to the Paris accord by executive fiat. He committed billions of dollars of taxes paid by American families to an international slush fund for developing countries, and then he set his agencies loose to suppress American industry, regardless of the costs imposed on working Americans.

And for what exactly? The EPA’s own modeling predicts that if the accord were fully implemented by 2030, it would reduce global temperature increases by 17/100ths of 1 degree by 2100.

Its advocates have recently dismissed this inconvenient truth by explaining: Well, it would at least send a powerful signal.

Well, we can already see the cost to average families of sending this powerful signal. European energy prices are more than twice as high as the United States, and their economies lag far behind even the anemic growth under Obama.

California has adopted many of these policies and now bears one of the highest energy costs in the country, along with the highest poverty rate. Without the high-tech wealth of the bay area, California’s economy would trail well behind the national growth rate.

Paris apologists promise a new era of green energy jobs. Well, as long as consumers are coerced into buying overpriced green products and struggling families are forced to fork over billions

of dollars through higher utility bills and taxes, well, of course, politically connected green energy companies will do very well, but at enormous expense to the overall economy.

Those 374,000 solar jobs we hear about generate just 1 percent of our electricity. The 187,000 coal, oil, and gas jobs remaining in this country generate 65 percent of our electricity.

The wide historical fluctuations in both carbon dioxide and global temperature suggest that natural influences vastly outweigh human causes. Paleoclimatologists tell us that atmospheric CO₂ levels were five times higher during the Jurassic Period, and global temperatures were 13 degrees higher during the Pleistocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum. That is long before humans or SUVs.

In 2016, President Obama came to Yosemite Valley to warn that the last of Yosemite’s surrounding glaciers would soon disappear. Ironically, if he stood on the same spot 20,000 years earlier, he would have been buried under about 2,000 feet of glacial ice.

The first IPCC report in 1990, sounding the alarm over global warming, gives us some practical experience with its climate modeling. Actual global temperatures are now well below the lowest of the forecasts that the IPCC made 27 years ago. And 20 years before that, the scientific consensus warned that pollution was about to trigger another Ice Age.

The fact is the current state of science is a long way from understanding the intricate natural forces and interrelationships in global climatology, let alone being able to accurately predict temperature changes over hundreds of years within fractions of a degree. That is perhaps why many prominent and respected climatologists continue to challenge and debate the question, despite claims that 97 percent of the scientists agree and despite calls to silence them as heretics.

As the fable of “The Emperor’s New Clothes” illustrates, nothing is more menacing to a flawed consensus than a single dissenter. Thanks to our politically incorrect President, the United States has just stepped forward from the crowd and pointed out the obvious.

The Paris accord points the way to a future of skyrocketing energy prices, lower productivity and wages, a massive wealth transfer from America to nations like China and India, and a permanently declining quality of life for our children.

Fortunately, President Trump has a different vision, a future in which families can enjoy the prosperity that abundant energy provides and the quality of life that comes from that prosperity. We can’t get there from Paris.

But whichever course we take, one thing is certain, the Earth will continue to warm and cool as it has for billions of years.

FREE NABEEL RAJAB

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Nabeel Rajab, the prominent Bahraini human rights defender who remains in custody in Bahrain after being arrested a year ago. He is currently being detained in a hospital.

Nabeel is a leading human rights activist known across the region and beyond for this peaceful views. His work is internationally recognized, and he has won several major human rights awards.

Nabeel has been unjustly imprisoned several times since 2011, when he participated in protests against the Government of Bahrain and joined calls for democratic reform.

In April 2015, he was arrested following tweets criticizing the Saudi-led coalition airstrikes in Yemen and the treatment of detainees in Bahrain's Juw Prison. He was released after 3 months, but prosecutors ordered his rearrest in June of 2016. He is being held on numerous charges and is on trial in two separate cases for his human rights work. If convicted on all charges, he would face up to 18 years in jail.

So what kinds of charges are we talking about? He is accused of insulting national institutions, spreading tendentious rumors, and offending a foreign country. In other words, he is accused of exercising his right to freedom of speech.

Last December, a court ordered Nabeel's release on bail, but he was immediately rearrested for making "false or malicious" statements in TV interviews where he criticized Bahrain's refusal to allow journalists and human rights groups access to their country.

I have experienced that, by the way. In August of 2014, I was denied permission to visit Bahrain with Brian Dooley, who works with Human Rights First.

Since his arrest last year, Nabeel has undergone two operations, suffered heart palpitations, required emergency medical care, and developed other medical conditions. After the first operation, he was returned to prison with an open wound and had to be rushed back to the hospital 3 days later to treat the resulting infection.

His trials have been postponed more than a dozen times since his arrest last year, most recently yesterday. Nabeel has spent most of the last 10 months in solitary confinement after The New York Times published an op-ed by him last September. In that piece, Nabeel urged the Obama administration to use its leverage to resolve the conflict in Yemen instead of fanning the flames by supplying arms to the Saudi coalition.

A second New York Times piece by Nabeel appeared just last month on May 17, where he urged the Trump ad-

ministration to review its relations with authoritarian regimes like Bahrain.

I include in the RECORD these two articles so this House can see for itself the kinds of opinions that the Bahraini Government considers so dangerous.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 4, 2016]

LETTER FROM A BAHRAIN JAIL

(By Nabeel Rajab)

RIFFA, BAHRAIN.—I write this from a Bahraini jail cell where I have been detained, largely in isolation, since the beginning of summer. This is not new to me: I have been here before, from 2012 to 2014, in 2015, and now again, all because of my work as a human rights defender.

Nor am I alone: There are some 4,000 political prisoners in Bahrain, which has the highest prison population per capita in the Middle East. This is a country that has subjected its people to imprisonment, torture and even death for daring to desire democracy. My close colleague Abdulhadi al-Khawaja was tortured and sentenced to life in prison in 2011 for his human rights work.

No one has been properly held to account for systematic abuses that have affected thousands. In 2015, I was arrested on new charges of "insulting a statutory body" and "spreading rumors during a time of war" for posts on Twitter. The police held me from April to July last year. I was released only after the king of Bahrain issued a pardon in an earlier case, also related to views I had expressed.

Despite the pardon, the 2015 charges and a travel ban remained in place, and I was threatened with further action. The head of the cybercrimes unit at the Criminal Investigation Directorate in Bahrain summoned me and my family to a meeting, where—in front of my children—he warned me that if I didn't stop my advocacy work, I would face up to 15 years in prison.

That threat became reality when I was arrested in June. The warrant came from the same cybercrimes unit chief who threatened me last year, and I now face prosecution for my work exposing human rights abuses. The authorities even added a third charge of "insulting a neighboring country," meaning Saudi Arabia. They have also laid a new charge against me of spreading "false news," in relation to interviews I've given to the news media. It's quite the rap sheet.

My supposed "insult" to Saudi Arabia relates to tweets I posted calling for an end to the war in Yemen, a war escalated by the Saudi-led coalition to which Bahrain belongs and for which the United States provides support. The United States has authorized multibillion-dollar arms sales to the Saudis since the war began last year.

From the beginning, I was against the war. The civilian death toll was immediate and catastrophic, and I spoke out against the unfolding humanitarian crisis, calling for peace. Now, I am paying the price.

I met Secretary of State John Kerry on his visit to Bahrain earlier this year and was glad to talk with him about our difficult situation. Mr. Kerry criticized the boycott of the 2014 election by opposition parties, although the opposition's demand was simply for a constitutional monarchy in place of Bahrain's autocratic system. Since that election, the leader of the largest opposition group, the Wafaq National Islamic Society, was sentenced to nine years for "promoting violence," and the society was suspended and its assets frozen.

I would like to ask Mr. Kerry now: Is this the kind of ally America wants? The kind that punishes its people for thinking, that prevents its citizens from exercising their basic rights?

The government has gone after me not only for my comments on Yemen, but also for my domestic activism. One of my charges, "insulting a statutory body," concerns my work shedding light on the torture of hundreds of prisoners in Jaw Prison in March 2015. The State Department has highlighted the same problem, but last year lifted the arms embargo it had placed on Bahrain since the repressions that followed the 2011 Arab Spring protests, citing "meaningful progress on human rights reforms." Really?

After I met Mr. Kerry, I was interrogated at the Interior Ministry by the chief of the cybercrimes unit, the one who later ordered my arrest. He wanted to know everything about my conversation with the secretary of state. That official interrogated me again in April after I signed an open letter, with 25 other activists, calling on President Obama to discuss human rights and the plight of activists in the Middle East when he visited Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

The Bahraini government tried to pressure me into publicly disavowing the letter. I refused.

Recent American statements on Bahrain's human rights problems have been strong, and that is good. But unless the United States is willing to use its leverage, fine words have little effect. America's actions, on the other hand, have emboldened the government to detain me and other rights advocates: Its unconditional support for Saudi Arabia and its lifting of the arms ban on Bahrain have direct consequences for the activists struggling for dignity in these countries.

Instead of fanning the flames in Yemen by supplying arms to the Saudi coalition, Mr. Obama's administration should use its leverage to resolve the conflict. Working to secure the release of people who call for peace, and are trying to build democracy in the region, would serve that aim.

Update: After this Op-Ed essay was published, Nabeel Rajab was charged with publishing "false news and statements and malicious rumors that undermine the prestige of the kingdom."

Nabeel Rajab is the president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and an advisory committee member for Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division.

[From the New York Times, May 17, 2017]

DON'T PROFIT FROM ABUSES BY BAHRAIN

(By Nabeel Rajab)

Yemen has entered its third year of war, and war crimes are being committed at an escalating rate. For Yemen's children, facing a man-made famine, this conflict between Houthi rebels and a coalition led by Saudi Arabia has begun a new phase of horrors.

Despite that, President Trump is planning to make Saudi Arabia the destination of his first state visit this week. Meanwhile, his administration already decided to lift all human rights restrictions on arms sales to my country, Bahrain, which is a partner in the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen. This reckless pursuit of profit without any strings attached—including a lucrative deal for 19 F-16 fighter jets worth \$2.8 billion—will aid and abet the destruction of Yemen, intensifying the country's humanitarian disaster.

It fills me with shame that my country, Bahrain, is bombing Yemen, with United States support. And while the Saudi-led coalition continues its air assault on Yemen, Bahrain is also trying to crush civil society back home. This other, domestic campaign is aimed at people who, like me, cannot abide injustice and are willing to speak out.